

Immigration Policy Is Local, Too

Tip O'Neill's quip that all politics is local is often quoted. But is it really the case? If it is, why isn't the leading issue in the immigration debate the anti-immigrationists' assault on the rights of other native-born Americans and others lawfully living in the USA? These people, who apparently greatly outnumber the anti-immigrant zealots, have natural rights to hire immigrants, to rent them houses and apartments, to sell them goods and services, to welcome them into schools, churches, community organizations, and homes. With such overweening arrogance do the anti-immigrationists presume to deny others these rights.

This is a completely local matter, wholly apart from the harm caused to would-be immigrants when they are denied entry into the USA. Strange to say, the anti-immigrationists purport to occupy the high ground in the debate, constantly bemoaning the impositions on their rights that admission of the immigrants would allegedly entail. But they do not occupy the high ground merely by ignoring the manifold ways in which their policy preferences would trench on the rights of American citizens and other legal residents.